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**From:** Seneca, Roy  
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**Sent:** 8/13/2013 7:36:15 AM  
**Subject:** Scranton Times-Tribune (8-13) Susquehanna residents head to D.C., imploring EPA to return to Dimock

## Susquehanna residents head to D.C., imploring EPA to return to Dimock

by Steve McConnell (staff writer)

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Ray Kemble brought a gallon of well water from his Susquehanna County home to Courthouse Square in Scranton on Monday, the first stop on a trip to Washington, D.C., to implore the Environmental Protection Agency to reopen its investigation of gas drilling and drinking water contamination in Dimock Twp.

A previously undisclosed document from the federal agency, which suggested the possibility of drilling-related methane contamination of groundwater, motivated Mr. Kemble and another Susquehanna County resident, Craig Stevens, to make the trip. They plan to drop off roughly 50,000 petitions today at the agency's headquarters.

The petitions, collected online by several environmental organizations, ask the EPA to return to Dimock and conduct another investigation of drinking water supplies.

Last year, federal regulators found no need to "take further action." The analysis of local drinking water found no threat to human health.

Mr. Kemble, 58, remains unconvinced.

To demonstrate his ire while speaking to reporters outside the courthouse, he held a plastic gallon container filled nearly halfway with a brownish-yellow liquid that he says he collected from the well of his Dimock home.

After drilling got underway near his home off Carter Road, he said his clean water became filthy.

"The smell and the color ... is 10 times worse," Mr. Kemble said.

After their stop in Scranton, Mr. Kemble and Mr. Stevens planned to drop off petitions at the EPA's regional office in Philadelphia on Monday, then head to the agency's headquarters in Washington.

The EPA investigation in Dimock revealed elevated levels of methane, barium, arsenic, and sodium. But regulators said homeowners' water had either been later successfully treated or did not pose a health concern. They also noted the contaminants are naturally occurring substances.

Twenty wells had methane levels above the state's reporting threshold and five of those were at or above the EPA's "trigger level" - the point when dissolved methane begins to escape into the atmosphere.

The agency said it has not done any detailed review to determine the cause of any contaminants. Cabot, a major player in gas shale development in Dimock and Susquehanna County, contends that methane and other contaminants in local water wells are natural phenomena and unrelated to its operations.

Meanwhile, state regulators determined in 2009 that faulty gas wells drilled by Cabot allowed methane to seep into 18 Dimock water supplies.

Environmentalists question why EPA pulled out of Dimock and other hotbeds of shale gas drilling in Wyoming and Texas. Some believe it is political and feel regulation took a backseat to energy development, especially in the federal government where it appears the Obama administration and some members of Congress have tilted in favor of gas extraction as a means for the U.S. to achieve greater energy independence.

Mr. Stevens owns property in Silver Lake Twp., about 20 miles from Dimock and near another heartland of gas drilling in Franklin Twp.

He believes gas drilling near his property polluted his drinking water.

"We're treating it as a civil rights issue and a human rights issue and we're not stopping until we get the truth," Mr. Stevens, 53, said.

About two months ago, Mr. Stevens noticed the water had a slight metallic taste. Overtime, the metallic taste got stronger, he said.

He said he started getting random nose bleeds.

Once he stopped drinking his water, the nose bleeds stopped. He admits tying it to gas drilling is anecdotal. He is waiting for tests of his water to verify his claim.

However, he issued a challenge to federal and state regulators to take a sip of his water and other drinking water in the communities where gas drilling has flourished.

"If you're telling us our water is fine and you know it's safe because you've seen all the test results then you come and drink a big 32 ounce," he said. "They will not touch it. They will not come."

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